

Good times and gourmet grub in the way-out West

## WYOMING



CHEYENNE FRONTIER DAYS

# Cheyenne: Cowboy Up!

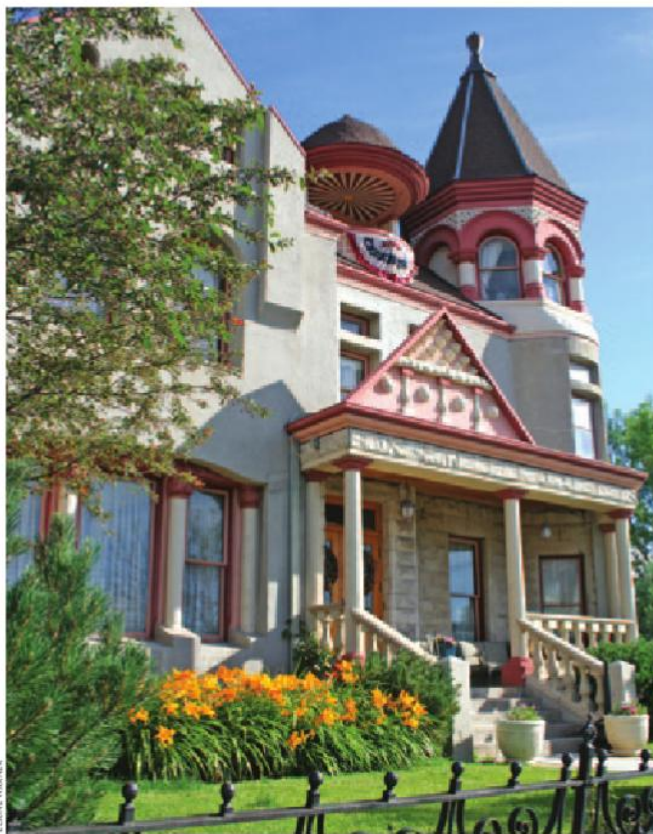
By Elaine Warner

**F**or a small town – under 60,000 population – Cheyenne packs a big wallop. Born with the construction of the transcontinental railroad, the town had rowdy beginnings. Between the railroad workers, the soldiers at Fort D.A. Russell and the cowboys driving cattle to the railhead, there was a lot of testosterone in town. An early newspaper headline read, “A few good hangin’s is [sic] a sign of good things to come.”

Today’s Cheyenne is a much more civilized city, but its western heritage is still evident – never more so than during the famous 10-day Frontier Days celebration. The centerpiece of the festival is the rodeo, now in its 115<sup>th</sup> year. The town hosts about 300,000 visitors during that period – and does it all with a staff of about a dozen paid workers and approximately 2,500 volunteers. Folks in Cheyenne schedule their vacations so they can help with the shindig. Activities include everything from pancake breakfasts and parades to art shows and entertainment. This year’s concert headliners include Toby Keith, Mötley Crüe, Kid Rock and the Charlie Daniels Band.



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During the festivities last year, I stayed at the Nagle Warren Mansion – once the home of Governor (and later U.S. Senator) F.E. Warren. An impressive Queen Anne construction, it was built in 1888 and is one of the few remaining elegant homes dating to the days when Cheyenne was the richest city (of its size) in the world.

The house is full of beautiful original features – rich woodwork and parquet floors, stained glass, rare cast-brass fireplaces, carved leather ceilings and a Moroccan chandelier in the foyer. My room overlooked the garden and the bathroom featured a claw-foot tub – complete with a little rubber ducky sporting a cowboy hat.

Breakfasts were multi-course gourmet meals served in the large dining room. Each day I looked forward to a savory surprise. One morning it was a tomato, mozzarella, basil and bacon frittata; French toast with orange sauce and dried cranberries was another morning; and my last morning, I was stuffed from all the good food I'd been enjoying, so the chef made my ham and smoked Gouda cheese omelet with just one egg. Afternoon tea time could compete with Fortnum and Mason's – sweets and finger sandwiches and an extra Western spin: bites of barbecued chicken and a deadly good dip with tortilla chips.

The rodeo action actually starts several days before the festival begins, with free events at the Frontier Park arena. To really get into the

## Great Grub

**Capital Grille** – located in the 1911 Plains Hotel. Serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and features Wyoming Angus beef and Wyoming bison.

**Little Bear Inn** – popular steakhouse for over half a century. Steak is a must, but try the Rocky Mountain oysters and save room for bear balls – vanilla ice cream rolled in crushed oreos with crème Anglaise, drizzled chocolate and raspberry sauce.

**Luxury Diner** – have breakfast or lunch in a trolley that served Cheyenne between 1896 and 1912. Traditional breakfast items – but I recommend the huevos rancheros.

**Suite 1901** – a tapas, wine and martini bar. Hey, cowboys go uptown sometimes.

## Shopping



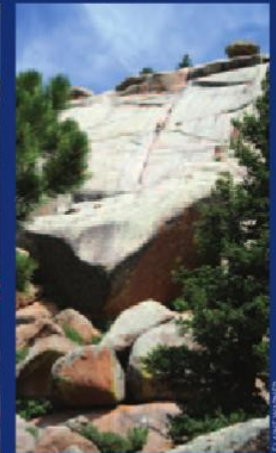
**Link Gallery** – local, national and international artists, interesting mix of traditional and contemporary works, jewelry, photography, art glass in a huge gallery.

**Deselms Fine Art** – original artwork by local and regional artists in an 1880s home.

**The Wrangler** – western wear and home décor since 1943 – from boots to hats and everything in between.

**Reata Collection** – cool boutique with unique clothing, purses and jewelry.

**Wyoming Home** – western home furnishings, décor and more. Pick up your Roy Rogers or Dale Evans lunch box here.



## Activities

**Trolley tours** – hear the history and see the sites including the gold-domed Capitol, Cattle Barons' Row mansions, Festival Park and the historic Depot.

**Terry Bison Ranch** – a train ride gets you up close to the animals. Also available, horse-back riding, trout fishing, old-fashioned photos and the Senator's Steakhouse – try the bison burger.

**Vedauwoo** – gigantic outcroppings of granite make this a climber's dream – some of the best wide-crack climbing in the world. (Feel free to make up your own joke.) Great for hiking, mountain biking and picnicking.

**Bit-O-Wyoming** – see some of southeast Wyoming's most beautiful scenery on a trail ride, then stay for a barbecue dinner and Western show.

spirit, take a "Behind the Chutes" tour in the arena. Word to the wise... don't wear sandals! The rodeo is the main attraction but Festival Park also features a midway with rides and food; an Indian Village with Indian tacos and dancing and skill demonstrations; Wild Horse Gulch, an Old West town with all sorts of vendors (including, last year, Scott Farms from Altus); and the Old West Museum. Frontier Days has a couple of other Oklahoma connections – both Sonic and Devon Energy are among the sponsors. And, of course, some of Oklahoma's best cowboys compete.

Everybody's a cowboy during Frontier Days, so saddle up and get going. For more information, visit [www.cheyenne.org](http://www.cheyenne.org) and [www.naglewarrenmansion.com](http://www.naglewarrenmansion.com). ●

